



Testimony to the Transportation Committee

Submitted by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

February 4, 2013

In support of

Senate Bill 225, An Act Concerning Appropriations for the Dial-A-Ride Program

Senate Bill 646, An Act Restoring Funding for the State Matching Grant Program for Demand-Responsive Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

LeadingAge Connecticut is a statewide membership organization representing over 130 mission-driven and not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the continuum of long term care. Our members are sponsored by religious, fraternal, community, and municipal organizations that are committed to providing quality care and services to their residents and clients. Our member organizations, many of which have served their communities for generations, are dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging.

On behalf of LeadingAge Connecticut, I would like to submit testimony on two of the bills that are before you today, Senate Bill 225, An Act Concerning Appropriations for the Dial-A-Ride Program and Senate Bill 646, An Act Restoring Funding for the State Matching Grant Program for Demand-Responsive Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities.

We commend the Committee for raising these two bills and encouraging a discussion of the extremely important issue of transportation options for elderly individuals living in the community. We are a state that is rapidly aging and as we do, our desire is to enable as many individuals as possible to live in their own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income or ability level. This is what is often referred to as "aging in place."

Transportation is a critical need for aging individuals in the community. As drivers age, they often lose the ability to drive on their own. The loss of one's ability to drive to the grocery store, the doctor's office, or to social engagements can threaten their ability to live independently in the community. This is why accessible and affordable transportation options in the community are essential.

In 2012, Special Act 12-6 was enacted which established a task force to study aging in place. That task force completed its work and submitted a final report to the General Assembly on January 1, 2013. An entire section of this report is dedicated to the importance of accessible transportation. We encourage the Committee to utilize this report and its recommendations as

you move forward to enact legislation to assist and enable older adults in our state to safely remain independent in the community and to age in place.

The *Report of the Task Force to Study Aging in Place* can be found on the Commission on Aging's website at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/coa/>. Their recommendations are as follows:

1. Coordinate and expand an array of public and private transportation options (including volunteer driving transportation programs) through a regional approach.
2. Encourage regional transportation consortiums to utilize regional mobility managers and automated scheduling software to maximize capacity and funding.
3. Incentivize coordination and regionalization for the DOT municipal matching grant program services in order to meet the social, daily living and medical needs of individuals.
4. The Department of Transportation should hold quarterly meetings with transportation services stakeholders (including regional planning districts, municipal program representatives and consumers who utilize transportation services) to address complexities in transportation service processes, regionalization of services and help move toward greater quality and efficiency in the program.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on these bills and we would gladly answer any question or be willing to work with the Committee on these important issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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